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REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to the Office Action dated June 21, 2007, claims 6-7, 21-22 and 35-36 have been canceled, and claims 1, 16 and 30 have been amended. Claims 1-5, 8-13, 15-20, 23-28, 30-34 and 37-42 remain in the application. Entry of these amendments, and re-consideration of the application, as amended, is requested.

II. PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. The Office Action Rejections

On pages (6)-(13) of the Office Action, claims 1-13, 16-28 and 30-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Fuisz et al., U.S. Patent 6,718,310 (Fuisz) and McArdle et al., U.S. Patent 6,622,126 (McArdle). On page (14) of the Office Action, claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Fuisz, McArdle and Billet, U.S. Publication 2003/0018514 (Billet).

Applicants' attorney respectfully traverses these rejections in view of the amended claims above and the arguments below.

B. The Applicants' Independent Claims

Independent claims 1, 16 and 30 are directed to performing customer management relationship processing in a computer. Claim 1 is representative, and comprises the steps of: (a) specifying both a focal product set and an analysis product set, prior to performing a pattern detection function, based on one or more user-specified attributes, wherein the focal product set includes products that trigger a sequence of customer purchasing behavior for a specified time interval and the analysis product set includes products that describe the customer purchasing behavior; (b) selecting a segment of customers from a database managed by the computer based on one or more user-specified attributes; (c) accessing customer transaction data from the database managed by the computer to be used in a pattern detection function, using the selected segment of customers; and (d) performing a pattern detection function in the computer using the customer transaction data accessed from the database managed by the computer, wherein the pattern detection function finds patterns in the customer purchasing behavior, as evidenced by the customer transaction data, related to a sequence of when purchases occur, by comparing the customer transaction data related to the focal product set to the customer transaction data related to the

analysis product set using a time frame for an initial focal product set purchase, and a number of time intervals for one or more analysis product set purchases before and after the initial focal product set purchase.

C. The Fuisz Reference

Fuisz describes methods that provide for auditing of on-line commercial transactions to determine what products are the primary motivations for a customer to begin an on-line shopping session. When a purchase is made during a shopping session, the method determines whether a purchased product is related to a previous "prime motivator" product. If so, the product is designated as a derivative product and a derivative count associated with the product is incremented. If not, the product itself is designated a prime motivator product and a prime motivator count associated with the product is incremented. The method may be repeated for every purchase fielded by an on-line commercial site.

D. The McArdle Reference

McArdle describes a system, program, and method which makes segment migration, the movement of individuals between segments over time, easily trackable, and provides a visualization that makes the results of the analyses useful. The preferred embodiment tracks which people are in which segment at each time period, then builds a file that gives, by person, a description of which segment(s) each person belonged to during each time period. From this table, a display is drawn which indicates in an intuitive manner the migration of members of different segments over time. These enhanced segmentation analyses allow the user to easily study and predict customer behaviors.

E. The Billet Reference

Billet describes a method and system for forecasting using pattern recognition and extension software. Models of the present invention select patterns from a library that match historical data and extend them into the future to make forecasts that can be used with a variety of predictive technologies.

F. Applicants' Independent Claims Are Patentable Over The References

Applicants' invention, as recited in independent claims 1, 16 and 30, are patentable over the Fuisz, McArdle and Billet references, because the claims recite limitations not found in the references.

Applicants' independent claims 1, 16 and 30 have been amended to recite that both a focal product set and an analysis product set are specified, prior to performing a pattern detection function, based on one or more user-specified attributes.

This differs from Fuisz in that Fuisz automatically identifies prime motivators and derivative products during an online shopping session, not before the session. Nowhere does Fuisz allow a focal product set and an analysis product set to be specified, before the online session is audited (or a pattern matching function performed), based on one or more user-specified attributes.

McArdle fails to overcome these deficiencies of Fuisz. Recall that McArdle was cited only for selecting a segment of customers. Indeed, McArdle only refers to segment migration, i.e., the movement of individuals between segments over time.

Moreover, Applicants' independent claims 1, 16 and 30 differ from Fuisz and McArdle in that they recite "comparing a focal product set to an analysis product set using a time frame for an initial focal product set purchase, and a number of time intervals for one or more analysis product set purchases before and after the initial focal product set purchase."

In contrast, Fuisz only performs an analysis of purchases following a prime motivator purchase (i.e., a derivative in Fuisz is defined as a product purchased after the prime motivator). Fuisz never identifies a derivative purchase as occurring before a prime motivator purchase.

Finally, Applicants' independent claims 1, 16 and 30 differ from Fuisz and McArdle in that they recite "selecting a segment of customers ... based on one or more user-specified attributes," and then "accessing customer transaction data ... to be used in a pattern detection function, using the selected segment of customers."

In contrast, McArdle performs an opposite function, i.e., it collects customer transaction data, which is then used to assign customers to segments. Moreover, McArdle teaches the use of customer segments for a completely different reason, namely for monitoring segment migration, but nowhere refers to segment selection in the context of identifying customer transaction data for a pattern detection function that finds patterns in customer purchasing behavior.

The Billet reference fails to overcome the above deficiencies of the Fuisz and McArdle references. Recall that Billet was cited only against dependent claim 15, and only for teaching that it

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is known to specify a customer level. Moreover, the cited location in Billet refers merely to horizontal and vertical pattern recognizing methods, but says nothing about customer levels, as that term is defined in Applicants' specification.

Consequently, Applicants' attorney submits that independent claims 1, 16 and 30 are allowable over the Fuisz, McArdle and Billet references. Further, dependent claims 2-5, 8-13, 15, 17-20, 23-28, 31-34 and 37-42 are submitted to be allowable over Fuisz, McArdle and Billet in the same manner, because they are dependent on independent claims 1, 16 and 30, respectively, and because they contain all the limitations of the independent claims. In addition, dependent claims 2-5, 8-13, 15, 17-20, 23-28, 31-34 and 37-42 recite additional novel elements not shown by Fuisz, McArdle and Billet.

III. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is now in good order for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner believe minor matters still remain that can be resolved in a telephone interview, the Examiner is urged to call Applicants' undersigned attorney.

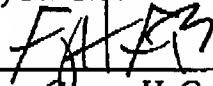
Respectfully submitted,

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